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J. H. Prasad

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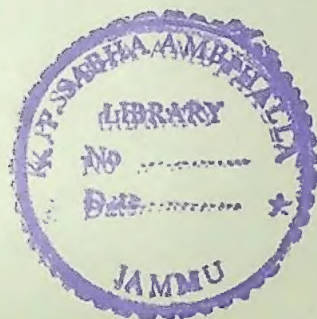
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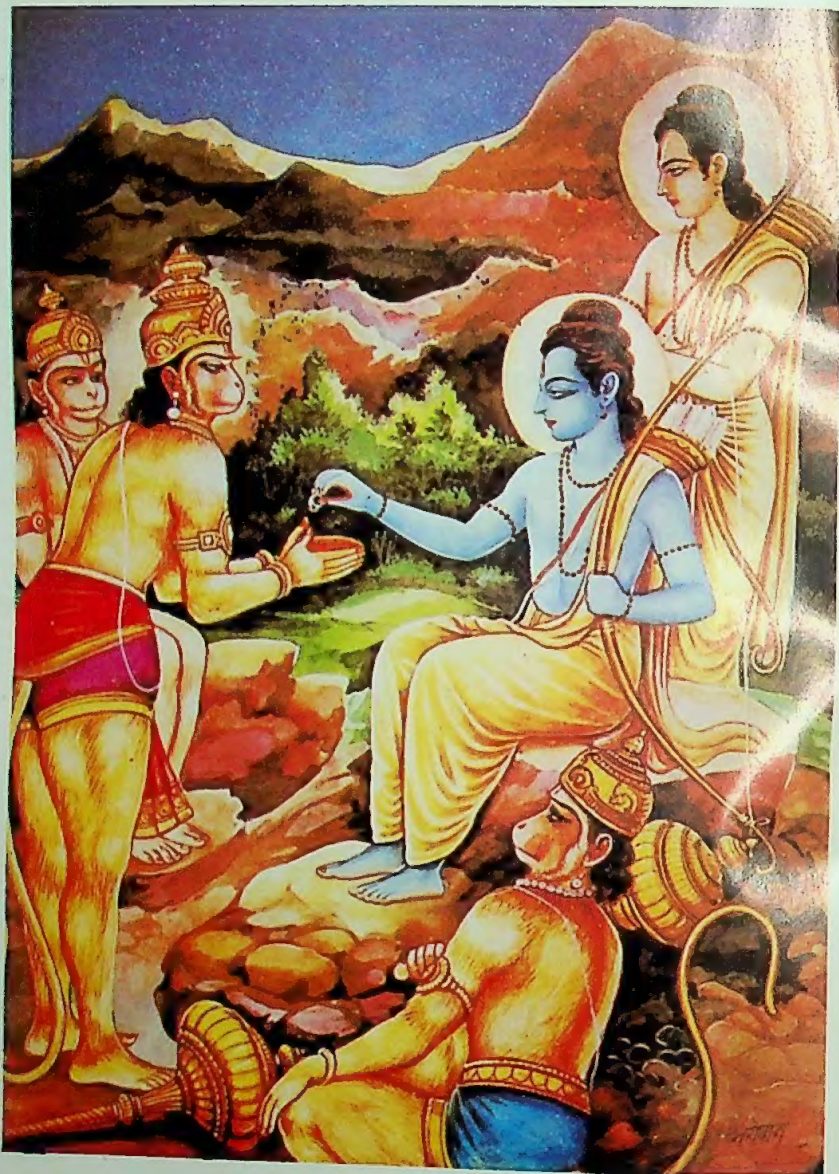
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The Kalyana-Kalpataru



Rāma giving his signet ring to Hanumān

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR
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ददौ तस्य ततः प्रीतः स्वनामाङ्कोपशोभितम् ।

अङ्गुलीयमभिज्ञानं

राजपुत्र्याः

परंतपः ॥

"Full of joy, Śrī Rāma (the scourge of his foes) gave to Hanumān a ring inscribed with his name as a token of credential to Sītā (the daughter of a king)."

(Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa IV. 44. 12)



The Duty of Man

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

A careful study of the modern mind will make it evident that in the present age people, in general, are in a way opposed to spiritual development. Such men are really few and far between who are in earnest about Self-realization. Even of those few people who strive for it, a large majority know not how to proceed on. Want of faith and devotion has made even real guides rare. Thanks to the times and environment in which we are living and the peculiarity of our nature, some of us are not able to translate our ideas into action in spite of our desire to practise self-discipline. The main cause responsible for this is ignorance combined with absence of faith in God, the scriptures and the great sages of yore. But nobody can make a gift of this faith or *Śraddhā*. Association with those possessing this *Śraddhā*, and austerity, sacrifice, charity and worship of God, practised in a disinterested spirit, are some of the means of purifying the heart, and it is only the pure in heart that are blessed with faith in scriptures and life after death and love for God and God-inspired men. A man is what his *Śraddhā* is. In this life as well as the next, *Śraddhā* is his only support. The *Gītā* says—

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः॥

(XVII. 3)

"The faith of each is shaped to the constitution of his mind, O descendant of Bharata. The man consists of his

faith; that which his faith is, he is even that." Therefore one should try to acquire true faith.

In whatever name or form of God you repose your faith, you will undoubtedly be considered to have faith in Him; for all names and forms are His. You may repose faith in and follow any religion which appeals to you, any *Rṣi*, *Mahātmā* or God-inspired man who is worthy of credence to you. All that is needed is *Śraddhā* or faith. God, religion and life after death, etc., are things which can only be believed for the main part. It is after repeated efforts and hard unceasing struggle that one obtains a direct perception of these truths. For the realization of these higher truths one cannot do without reposing faith in some one, at least, in the beginning. If one does not do so, he is sure to turn an atheist and deviate from the path of blessedness. Nay, he will never enter the path of God-realization and will go down in the scale of evolution.

If you do not believe in any particular religion, scripture or the utterances of saints and sages of old, you should certainly believe at least in the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*. For the teachings of the *Gītā* are in harmony with the teachings of almost all the different religions of the world.

If you do not believe even in the *Gītā*, you should repose faith in God according as you have conceived of Him and, surrendering yourself to Him, apply yourself in right earnest to the work of Self-realization. Supposing you doubt even the existence of God, you should select the best man of the age and arm yourself with sufficient courage to follow in his footsteps.

If you cannot repose faith in any saint or great man of the present age, you should pause to consider whether there is no one superior to you in the whole world so far as the knowledge of the path of blessedness is concerned.

If you allege that such men do exist but you have not yet come across any such person, it is your duty to find them out; or, if you think that there are many people superior to you but people who can ably instruct you in the Law of Higher Life are few and far between and those few who exist are not easily accessible to men lacking in faith and cannot be recognized even if we happen to meet such persons, having not the eyes wherewith to recognize them, it is essential for you to consider whether the sort of life you are leading is conducive to your true well-being. If you are satisfied with what you are doing, you should at least exert yourself more and more for your advancement day by day. You should cultivate virtues like serenity, self-control, fortitude, forgiveness, composure of mind, contentment, truthfulness and compassion practise *Japa*, austerity, meditation and service, and give up vices like sloth, mendacity, sensuality, duplicity, thieving and adultery. Before undertaking any work one should carefully consider whether what he is going to do is really conducive of good to him and correct at once whatever defect appears to him therein. Human birth is a rare gift. Even lacs of rupees cannot prolong one's life even by a minute. Such a valuable life should never be wasted in sleep, lethargy, idle pursuits and indolence. Anyone who passes his time listlessly is bound to come to grief. A Hindi poet has beautifully said—

"One who takes up any work without due consideration of its pros and cons surely comes to grief. Not only does he spoil the work and become an object of laughter in the eyes of the world, but he loses his peace of mind, and the pleasures of the world lose all charm for him. Giradhara, the poet, says that the laws of *Karma* are inexorable. A work done without due consideration pricks the heart like a spike."

One should, therefore, take particular care to employ

his time to the best advantage according to his discretion, so that he may not have to repent afterwards. One has to pay a very high price for obtaining human birth. One has to do so many things in the course of one single life, which is very short. Hence one should wake up and be wise enough to devote the rest of his life to works conducive to our highest good.

If one does not engage according to his light and knowledge in works which are beneficial to him here as well as hereafter, it will be nothing short of a height of folly, indolence and sloth on his part. He who does not withdraw his mind from idle pursuits, lethargy and enjoyment of sense-objects and put it on the right track and proceed along the downward path, is his own enemy. *Śruti* says—

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति
न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः।

भूतेषु भूतेषु विचिन्त्य धीराः
प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति॥

(*Kenopaniṣad* II. 5)

"It is well and good if one realizes Him in this very life: if, on the contrary, one fails to know Him in this life, he will be a greater loser. Men of strong determination who seek for the Lord in every creature attain immortality on casting off this body."

One has to tread this path of self-evolution by himself; no one else can do it for him. Therefore, the only wise thing for him is that he should be vigilant every moment of his life and exercising self-control, should devote himself whole-heartedly to practices which insure his permanent good here as well as hereafter. Idle pursuits, lethargy, enjoyment of sense-objects and immortal practices ought to be given up as the greatest stumbling-blocks on this path. *Śruti* exhorts as follows—

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

क्षुरस्य
दुर्ग

धारा
पथस्तत्कवयो

निशिता

दुस्त्यया ।

वदन्ति ॥

(*Kenopaniṣad* I. 3. 14)

"Arise, awake and, approaching great souls, receive instruction from them. The wise say that the road is difficult to tread; it is like treading on the sharp edge of a razor."

But, because the road is very difficult, one should not lose heart. By fixing one's mind on God, one can easily surmount all difficulties through His grace—

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादान्तरिष्यसि ।

The Lord further says—

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

(*Gītā* VII. 14)

"This divine *Māyā* (illusion) of Mine, consisting of the three *Guṇas*, is difficult to pierce; those who devote themselves to Me alone, they cross over this illusion."

To visualize the Lord at all places and in all things, constant unfailing remembrance of God and acting according to His commandments constitutes self-surrender to God. This is also called one-pointed and exclusive devotion (अनन्य भक्ति) to the Lord.

Therefore to take refuge in God is the foremost duty of all those who believe in God. One who completely surrenders himself to Him can never perpetrate anything which is opposed to the will of the Lord. He attains a state which is beyond all fear; he is completely rid of grief and infatuation. He enjoys everlasting peace which nothing can disturb and his bliss knows no bounds. This ineffable mood of his cannot be understood or explained to others through example, words or signs. When even those who have attained such a state are unable to describe it, how can

others do it? Mind and speech have no access there. It can only be experienced through one's purified intellect. This is what the *Vedas* and the *Śāstras* say—

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते।
दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः॥

(*Kathopaniṣad* I. 3. 12)

"Concealed in all beings, this *Ātmā* does not manifest itself. It can only be perceived, through the pointed and subtle intellect, by men of subtle sight."

The Lord Himself says—

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः॥

(*Gītā* VI. 21)

"That in which he findeth supreme delight, which the intellect can grasp and which is beyond the senses; wherein established, he is not shaken even by heavy sorrow."

Every human being should endeavour to attain this state: it is the paramount duty of all.



There is one and only one *Brahma*, and there is no duality. This means that there is nothing but God. It is a very simple thing. Why do they not believe it? Why do they not have faith in this? Have they all become faithless? It is abusive to call anybody faithless. Then, why do you not have faith in Him, in the Self-God who is life of all the lives and Spirit of all the spirits? Have faith in Him and all your sins will be washed away. If only one such man is born in a country, the whole country is bound to flower and flourish.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Renunciation of the Fruit of Action

—Swami Ramsukhdas

'*Karmaphalatyāga*' (renunciation of the fruit of action) is another name of '*Karmayoga*' (the discipline of action) because in the discipline of action only renunciation of the fruit of action is important. This *Yoga* was lost to the world long before the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa (*Gītā* 4/2). The Lord by His grace revealed this *Karmayoga* again, by making Arjuna an instrument (*Gītā* 4/3), to human beings in order to authorize them to attain salvation which is generally considered impossible without leading a secluded life having renounced actions, objects and kith and kin etc. The Lord means to explain that a person can attain salvation or God-Realization in all circumstances by performing his duties in a detached way.

In *Karmayoga* renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of action is important. The actions bear fruit in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances such as health and sickness, riches and poverty, honour and dishonour, praise and blame and so on. If a person has an attachment or aversion to them, he can never realize God (*Gītā* 2/42—44).

Perishable things are the fruit of action such fruit being perishable can't be everlasting. Action is also not everlasting. Then how can the fruit of action be everlasting when its cause, the action is perishable. So it is an error to be attached to the perishable fruit or to desire it. Renunciation of attachment to the fruit of action is the seed of *Karmayoga*.

It seems difficult to renounce attachment to actions and their fruit while performing actions in *Karmayoga*. But actually it is not so. It seems difficult when a man regards the objects (body etc.) required for the performance of actions as his and for him. But when he regards them as the world's because they have been acquired from the world and he performs his duty, his attachment is renounced and he realizes God (*Gītā* 3/19). In fact it is not actions which lead to bondage but it is desire and attachment to the fruit of actions which lead to bondage. When desire and attachment to the fruit of actions are renounced, all actions change into inaction (*Gītā* 4/19–23).

The Lord declares the unselfish performance of actions better than their renunciation (*Gītā* 5/2). According to the Lord a *Samnyāsī* is not he who does not perform actions but he who performs actions (duty) without depending on their fruit (*Gītā* 6/1). A *Karmayogī* being free from attachment and having renounced all thoughts easily attain to *Yoga* (*Gītā* 6/4). On the other hand those, who having regarded actions and their fruits as theirs and for them, hanker after pleasures, verily eat sin (*Gītā* 3/13). Therefore in the world it is attachment to the fruit of action by which a man is bound (*Gītā* 5/12). He who relinquishes the fruit of action is a man of renunciation (*Gītā* 18/11).

In the *Gītā* there is a greater emphasis on the renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of actions than any other means of God-Realization. Actions should be performed renouncing attachment and desire for fruits (*Gītā* 18/6). A striver should be attached neither to virtuous or extraordinary actions nor should have an aversion to evil or ordinary actions, because actions will be over but attachment and aversion will continue and they will lead him to bondage. On the other hand he who performs actions being free from egoism, attachment and aversion, though he slays people,

he slays not nor is he bound (by his actions) (*Gītā* 18/17). Therefore the Lord declares that the renunciation of the fruit of action is better than penance, knowledge, action, practice and meditation etc. Other means outwardly seem excellent but they don't prove much useful and moreover they involve labour. But renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of actions leads a striver to salvation very easily in the same circumstances he is placed in, without changing his place or order of life etc.

In fact God is not acquired but realized. He is realized by renouncing the sense of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and desire for the body, mind, senses and objects etc., rather than by practising spiritual disciplines. As soon as affinity for matter is renounced through knowledge, practice, meditation, penance etc., a striver realizes God Who is ever-realized. This affinity for matter is renounced more easily by renouncing the fruit of action than by knowledge, practice, meditation and penance etc., because in all these means a striver has affinity for matter (body, mind, intellect and senses etc.) because he regards the body as his and the means for him. If such a striver has the aim of God-Realization, and he wants to realize Him by these means he realizes Him with delay and difficulty at last. But in *Karmayoga* he renounces his affinity for matter from the very beginning and so he realizes God Who is ever-realized quickly and easily. This affinity is the main stumbling block to God-Realization—this fact does not become clear to a striver when he follows other means.

When a striver resolves that he has not to perform forbidden action such as theft, falsehood, infidelity, violence, fraud, forgery and eating forbidden food etc., under any circumstances even by thought and speech, then only prescribed actions are automatically performed by him.

A striver should resolve to relinquish forbidden actions

rather than to perform prescribed actions otherwise he will feel proud of performing prescribed actions and his egoism will be maintained. Because of his pride, forbidden actions will be performed by him. But if he resolves that he will not perform forbidden actions, he will not feel proud because he is not doing anything creditable which requires any ability or power. In this sort of relinquishment also he may feel proud out of folly. Then he should think that there is nothing to feel proud of as he is doing nothing special in renouncing what should be renounced. A man has desire to reap the fruit of action only when some action is performed. If no action has been performed, only the forbidden action has been renounced, why can he have a desire for the fruit of action? When a person has no sense of doership, the attachment to the fruit of action is automatically renounced. This renouncement naturally leads him to peace which is axiomatic.

The three means (constant practice of concentration, performance of action for the Lord and renunciation of the fruit of actions) of God-Realization have been described in the ninth, the tenth and the eleventh verses. Out of the three (except the renunciation of the fruit of action) if a thought is given seriously, every means includes the other two also as (1) In the constant practice (of concentration), adoration and chanting the name etc., actions are done for the Lord and there is no desire for fruit. (2) In the performance of actions for the Lord, there is practice and there is no desire for the fruit of actions.

First of all a striver should fix his aim of God-Realization. Then he should realize his real affinity for God. After it any one of the three means will lead him to God-Realization.

The ease or difficulty of a means depends on the inclination and aim of a striver. If he has the only

inclination and aim of God-Realization, the means becomes easy otherwise difficult.

As food stuff may be different according to the taste of the hungry persons but hunger before and satisfaction after eating the food are the same; so do strivers have different means according to their interests, beliefs and qualifications but pain of non-realization of God and the desire (hunger) for God-Realization are the same to all the strivers. Every striver belonging to any class attains the same bliss (satisfaction) in the form of God-Realization.

Here the Lord has mentioned four means of God-Realization by making Arjuna an instrument.

(1) Path of Surrender (2) Path of Practice (3) Performance of Actions for God (4) Renunciation of the Fruit of Actions.

All the four means are equally independent and noble and all of them lead to God-Realization. A striver can adopt any one of them according to his inclination, faith and qualification by regarding it as the best.

He should never consider the means (spiritual discipline) followed by him to be inferior to other paths and should never lose heart so far as God-Realization is concerned. If the only aim of a striver is God-Realization, the means (spiritual discipline) followed is according to his inclination, faith and qualification and it is practised to the best of his capacity and with promptness having a burning desire for God-Realization, his means will lead him to God-Realization without any doubt. The reason is that God is omniscient; He having known the striver's intention and efforts etc., by His grace conduces him to God-Realization.

Every human being is authorized to God-Realization because the Lord by His grace has bestowed upon him this human body so that he may realize Him. No two persons can possess the worldly materials equally because

they acquire them according to their fate. But everyone can realize God equally because He is not realized through actions.

Dispassion for the world and a keen desire for God-Realization are two important factors for God-Realization. Though any one of the two can conduce a striver to God-Realization, yet a keen desire is a more powerful means than dispassion.

Out of the four means mentioned above the first three specially arouse desire for God-Realization while the fourth-one (renunciation of the fruit of action) conduces a striver to renounce affinity for the world.

When a striver feels that the mundane pleasures are painful and he renounces them from his heart, then having his aim of God-Realization, he will automatically progress towards spiritualism and realize Him by His grace.

Similarly as God is the most loving to him and he can't bear separation from Him, his unbearable restlessness will also lead him to God-Realization.



The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything else vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent ocean of consciousness. As far as the eye could see, the shining billows were madly rushing at me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up! I was panting for breath. I was caught in the rush and collapsed, unconscious. What was happening in the outside world I did not know; but within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence, of the Divine Mother.

—Sri Ramakrishna

The Devotee

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Some people nowadays have formed an impression that the practice of devotion is exceptionally easy and we can be full-fledged devotees even though addicted to sin and misery, wickedness and vice. That is why in India today there is a regular glut of devotees. Uttering a few names of God from motives of lust, anger, greed or hypocrisy, or dressing themselves in imitation of devotees, they proceed to advertise themselves as genuine devotees. They do not consider that devotees have to pass through an ordeal of fire, have to quaff the draught of poison regarding it as consecrated food, and renouncing all attachments for enjoyment and luxury, wealth and family, have to surrender their selves wholly and exclusively to God. Devotion is accomplished when, understanding the Truth about God, worship is rendered to Him in the purest spirit, through performance of one's allotted duty. The devotee, indeed, becomes a personal servitor of God. The entire responsibility for his maintenance and protection is taken up by the Lord; therefore, he becomes free, in every way, from sin and misery. He becomes the highest ideal of the world, for all the divine qualities develop within him. Such a devotee alone becomes dear to the Lord, and for redeeming him alone the Lord takes the responsibility upon Himself. Surrendering his heart, mind, intellect, body, family, wealth, possessions, desires and cravings, and, in fact, every other thing at the feet of God, the devotee becomes

free of all anxiety and worry. He sees his Lord pervading the world, that is why he entertains love for all beings in the universe and moves about, almost like a lunatic, for rendering service to them.

सो अनन्य जाकेँ असि मति न टरइ हनुमंत।

मैं सेवक सचराचर रूप स्वामि भगवंत॥

"O Hanumān, he alone is an exclusive devotee, who is never shaken from the belief that he is a servant, and the entire creation, animate as well as inanimate, is manifestation of God."

The life of such an exclusive devotee becomes full of God, all his works become God's works, he remains devoted only to God and worships God alone; he never gets attached to any worldly object and remains friendly to all beings—even to those who entertain hostility towards him. He recognizes only his one Lord and sees in the world, exclusively and for all time, the extension solely of the Divine Play. Life and death both become equally pleasurable to him.

जीवन-मरण चरणके चाकर, चिन्तारहित चित्त है नित्य।

"In life and death servitor of His feet, the mind is eternally free from worries."

He never gets disappointed with life, neither does he ever tremble for fear of death. If ever for the sake of God's pleasure the image of death which people regard as extremely terrible, appears before him, it looks most charming in the eye of the devotee, who runs ahead, lovingly and joyfully, to embrace it. He knows that in the form of death, God alone has come to bless him with Divine sight and lift him up in the lap Divine. "I am the all-destroying death "मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहम्" (X. 34) remembering these words of the Lord in the *Gītā* he welcomes death with a delightful heart. This is the reason why devotees smilingly sacrifice themselves at the altar of religion in

the course of service to their Lord and Master, and sacrifice of life for the sake of the Lord appears in their view as the most glorious of actions. Wherever, at whatever time, and in whatever manner they hear the call of the Lord to sacrifice their lives, there at that very time and in that very manner, they run to do the same, just as the penniless beggar runs to carry off wealth during a common loot.

जो सिर साँटे हरि मिलै तो हरि लीजै दौर।

'नारायण' या देखें गाँहक आवे और॥

"If God can be attained in exchange for offering the head, make haste and run to take Him. For, says Nārāyaṇa, other customers may appear, if there is delay."

He moves with the head in his hand, as it were, and goes on seeking opportunity to offer it at the feet of the Lord. Wherever he is of any service to the Lord, he feels himself extremely thankful and blessed. This is the reason why the greatest of temptations cannot shake him from the path of virtue and righteousness; the greatest of suffering cannot throw him out of the Lord's path—

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते॥

"Established in which he is not moved even by great sorrow."

The intoxicated elephant was set loose on Prahlāda, huge venomous snakes were released to bite him, recourse was taken to black magic, he was dropped from the steep mountain cliff, witchcraft was applied to kill him, shutting him up in the death-room, it was filled up with poison gases, attempt was made to crush him under mountains, but that true devotee of resolute faith neither feared nor met with death, nor did he give up his faith. Tired and perplexed Hiraṇyakaśipu had to declare at last, "Though a mere child, how fearless and unperturbed he sits before me! It appears as if he is supremely powerful." What was

the source of Prahāda's power? What supernatural strength did he possess that enabled him to act in this manner! He possessed devotion to God, his heart was filled up with divine Love, surrendering himself from every point of view in the hands of God, he became fearless and free from worries for all time and in every respect, and he possessed the unshakable faith, and in fact, he actually saw that the whole world was full of God, that every single thing belonging to this world was a manifestation of God. That is why whatever things Hirāṇyakaśipu set loose on him in order to kill him, all those appeared to him as God. Why should God kill His devotee under these circumstances? On the contrary, in order to justify Prahāda's statement—in order to give a visual proof of His all pervasiveness—the formless, absolute, all-pervading Supreme Being broke the column of stone and revealed Himself in an unprecedented Form—

प्रेम बड़ो प्रह्लादहिको जिन पाहनतें परमेशुर काढ़े ।

"Love was supreme in Prahāda, who brought out God from stone."

Mīrā quaffed the cup of poison with a smile on her lips, Haridāsa gladly bore the strokes of the lash shouting the name of Hari at the top of his voice and craved the pardon of God for his persecutors. This should not lead one to believe that the devotee is a coward at heart and bears every tyranny out of sheer cowardice. A coward lacks endurance, he turns tail out of fear of life, but entertains evil in his mind and goes on cursing his persecutor. The devotee's heart remains full of virtues like forgiveness, compassion, spirit of non-injury and love, that is why he never does any harm to any being; suffering inconveniences himself he seeks good to others and returns love even to his persecutor. People who lack knowledge of this characteristic of the devotee assume the latter to be weak

and timid. But really speaking the devotee is a hero. Forgiveness, non-violence and compassion, etc., are virtues of the hero and not of the coward.



सुनहु भरत हम झूठ न कहही । उदासीन तापस बन रहहीं ॥
 सब साधन कर सुफल सुहावा । लखन राम सिय दरसन पावा ॥ २ ॥
 तेहि फल कर फलु दरस तुम्हारा । सहित पयाग सुभाग हमारा ॥
 भरत धन्य तुम्ह जसु जगु जयऊ । कहि अस पेस मगन मुनि भयऊ ॥ ३ ॥
 सुनि मुनि बचन सभासद हरषे । साधु सराहि सुमन सुर बरषे ॥
 धन्य धन्य धुनि गगन पयागा । सुनि सुनि भरतु मगन अनुरागा ॥ ४ ॥

"Listen Bharata—I tell no falsehood, I am an ascetic dwelling in the forest and having no concern with the world—I obtained the happy and excellent reward of all spiritual practices when I saw Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma and Sītā. The reward of that reward itself is your sight, on which not only I but the whole of Prayāga deserves to be congratulated. Bharata, you deserve all praise since by your glory you have conquered the whole world." As he concluded his speech the sage was overwhelmed with love. Those who were assembled there rejoiced to hear the sage's words, while the gods acclaimed Bharata and rained flowers on him. Even as Bharata heard the shouts of applause in the heavens as well as in Prayāga he was overwhelmed with emotion."

—Mānasa

"When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey; so let the lotus of your character be full-blown, and the results will follow." This is a great lesson to learn.

—Swami Vivekananda

Aditi

—Dr. V. V. B. Rama Rao

Aditi was the daughter of Dharaṇī and Dakṣa. She was the wife of Kaśyapa, the *Prajāpati*. Kaśyapa had four wives: Aditi, Diti, Vinatā and Kadrū. But none matched Aditi in her merit, in her *Puṇya*. She had been so good, so kind and so god-loving, that the children she bore and reared were always good, kindly and well-behaved, like the angels themselves. If God were to take an incarnation, He would be born to Aditi alone and not to her other 'sisters'.

Kaśyapa, one day stopped his penance and came to Aditi. He made kind enquiries as to how her worship of guests and worship of gods was going on. Aditi told him that owing to the disturbance caused by Diti's children it was not going on so well as before. Kaśyapa advised her to pray to Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu. Aditi prayed to the Lord and He was pleased. At that time emperor Bali had the world of angels under his power. Aditi prayed to Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu to remove Bali and was told to serve Kaśyapa. He also promised to be born to her to eventually remove her troubles. Then in His next incarnation He was born as Vāmana to Aditi and Kaśyapa.

While Diti was with child, Aditi felt that if Diti's son were to be strong, he would be a powerful enemy to her. So she called her son Indra and asked him to see that such a son was not born to Diti. Indra entered Diti's womb and broke the baby into 49 pieces which came out as Maruts.

Coming to know of this from Aditi herself, Diti cursed her to take birth as a human. Then Aditi was born as Devakī.

(—*Devī Bhāgavata*)

The demons were bothering the angels taking away their portions of the oblations. Seeing that her children were put to trouble, Aditi prayed to Sūrya. When Sūrya appeared before her, she prayed to him to bless her with a son of his radiance who could become an angel. Suśamna, the ray with warmth, entered Aditi's womb. Even then she continued her fasting. She was chided for going on fast even while being with child. Aditi was angry and saying that by her fasting the little one would not die she delivered the boy. The boy was Mārtaṇḍa.

(—*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*)

Aditi's children were the eleven Ādityas. Once when she went to play with Kaśyapa, Kaśyapa was in play with Kadrū. Aditi got angry and cursed the two to be born as humans. Kadrū in her turn cursed Aditi too to be born as a human. Aditi was born as Devakī.

(—*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*)



Selfless service can reveal to you the identity of humanity. It can expand your heart and take you to the door of intuition. Identify yourself with all; love all; and constantly remind yourself of your essential divine nature. Feel that you are one with the whole universe. The whole world is bound to work with one who feels himself one with the world.

—*Swami Sivananda*

The Purpose of Human Life

—A Friend

The question which vexes many a mind is, what is the purpose of human life? According to our beliefs human creation is the result of playfulness of God. All the creation comes out of Him and is a part of Him and all this ultimately merges in Him. But that word 'ultimately' has a long meaning. If some master mind amongst us could comprehend all this long period, as compared to our brief histories, the assertion that all this is but a 'joke' and 'unreal' would become apparent to him, but not to us. How can we believe that this world of ours, with its life, human and animal, is unreal? How can we believe what Shakespeare said—that all this world is a grand stage and that all of us are actors. The unreal part is actually of the form and not the substance. Actors on a stage are not unreal beings! But they are unreal in the sense that they are outwardly attired, and allotted characteristics and actions at the sweet will of the Stage-Director, and that what they say and appear to be on the stage is not their real self. Now if anyone of us were to analyse our hopes, desires and ambitions, the accompanying efforts, and the results achieved, the conclusion would be inevitable that results belie us. Man thinks and plans for one thing, and the opposite happens. It is of course a matter of belief to realize that an invisible State-Director is controlling all our movements, which despite our thoughts and desires, shape results according to His will and not ours! The question

arises, why do anything then? Yes, that is correct. Just sit quiet—try this and you will find that the invisible hand of the Stage-Director will make you move, despite your resolve! You have got to go on acting, according to His desires or, shall we say, according to His plan. That 'plan' of course, is very intricate, and not always readily comprehensible, though it is easy to see that it is perfect and automatic. What is our real self? This is obviously not our body, but the soul within. That soul is the vital force. The essential unit of the vital force must be the same for all living beings. This infinitesimal unit is a part of God Himself. Remember the saying "God created His own Image!" Now what should God want from these human beings of his creation? Service to Himself? Does He need any? If not, then what? Service to your own self? Then how would the world exist? The system has got to be automatic and perfect. Service of one by another is the most obvious, natural and fundamental law that God should intend for his creation. The degree, nature and variety of this 'service' performed by one being towards another is automatically recorded by an invisible agency (shall we call the agents infallible of God) to determine that being's future 'destiny', and according to Hindu belief, the future births. According to this future destiny, the kind of body, family, environments and position in life will result. One would think that it is not possible to change that destiny, and then why bother about anything specially how you act and behave in life. There comes that thing called intellect, bestowed upon human beings. It is that the kind of intellect you have is predestined, based on past *Karma*, but still it has the power to better itself, specially when coming in contact with saints and saintly beings. In fact, this contact is also predestined in the Master Plan of the creator; but when it offers itself, the intellect has the choice to make

itself better. Whether we like it or not, this cycle of betterment or grading down goes on, because, in the eternal drama, every being must play all the roles, one time or other, and this system of interchange is automatic, following intricate laws which we cannot define. You will say that this is extreme fatalism. No. It does not mean that you sit idle and do not exert yourself. The only difference is in the realization that your exertions are like the exertions on a dramatic stage and that although even on the stage you must behave and act strictly according to the role allotted to you, yet within yourself you are something entirely different and when back to the 'green room' you are your real self again. Why not liken that 'green room' to a temple of God, where, left to yourself before the deity, you can shed your worldliness and think of your real self—your soul, which is a part of God Himself. Your soul is the same as the soul of any other being! Then why differentiate, between different beings? Why not have the same regard for all? Why not render the same service to all? You know that even though you have to act and do, you are not master of the results. Then why be good to one and harsh towards another? You think you are doing good to your child, say. But, it may only mean the child's spoliation or it may only bring misery to the child in the end. You think you have slighted someone, insulted someone! It may on the other hand result in the upliftment of that being! Whereas that being benefits, you have unnecessarily blotted your own copy book. Remember, the accounting done by the invisible agency of God is most accurate. Now, if this has any meaning to you, why not start loving every being? Of course, this is very difficult. But your intellect is there. Why not tax it a little for your own good? Think whether you can pass your days better by loving or by hating. If the answer is towards the former,

why not leave hating? Unless you do that, mere selective loving would still leave innumerable chinks in your armour! Now, you might ask, what is love and loving? From time immemorial writers have written on this subject. The answer is difficult. The answer can be given by your own true self. Or, ask a person, who is supposed to be 'in love' in the most material sense of the word, on this worldly stage. That person would say that being in love is a state of feeling in which he or she should like to give his or her all to the object of their love, without caring in the least what is got in return. This is what loving is—giving without the expectation of receiving. Again, you will say that it is an impossible proposition to follow in everyday existence, when dealing with all and sundry. Yes it is, because everyone does not or cannot follow it and consequently the imbalance. But what of you, who are supposed to have got a good peep into the purpose of existence—service to others? Will you render that service, without love? Love and service to others must go together. That is why God actually created us. Those who cannot realize this must obviously act otherwise and revolve in the eternal cycle. Is it enjoyable? Ask anyone who appears to be 'happy' or says he is happy. He will not probably answer correctly, for it may be difficult to cast away hypocrisy. Then ask him to try and answer this question to himself in solitude. Do it yourself also. The answer cannot be difficult. This so-called 'anxious for pleasure' being has a vast enormity of anxiety and pain as compared to 'pleasure'. Once you come to realize that it is actually a sugar-coated bitter pill, you will think of getting freed from it. You, who are you? The flesh of the body about yourself? The you is the soul within you and is bound till such time as the true realization of God's purpose does not dawn on you, You need not feel that you are a one-

sided loser in the act of love and service. You are the one who gains the maximum—a relief from the eternal cycle, and reunion with the Almighty Soul from which you (your soul) sparked off to take part in this eternal drama of the Creator. In the material world also you gain substantially in the form of peace of mind, which the path of hate and disservice can never yield. When there is true love and selfless service, no *Karma* can bind your soul to future births and existences and compel you to continue in a state of bondage and misery. Being in love has been defined. But what is love itself? Whom do you love? If you love the outward looks and shape of body of a person, would you continue to do the same when the living force is gone out of the body? Since outward looks and shapes are likely to change rapidly, if your love is for them, would it continue for altered looks? No certainly not, unless you were to love something invisible and within that body—the soul of the being. The English poet Yeats aptly said that he loved the 'pilgrim soul in you' and the 'sorrows' of your changing face.' If you love the soul, you are loving God Himself! And that is what God would have intended when he created these 'images of himself', in the shape of human beings. When you ignore the outward looks and the physical body, you are entering the realm of universal love, because then every being, having the same soul—a spark out of the Almighty Soul, would be loved by you in the same manner. You shall have fulfilled the purpose for which man was created—for Love and for Service.



Love and Grace

—Dr. R. D. Srivastava

Few offer flowers, few by garlands deck
Few cry and shriek and burn incense sticks;
Then to their dross they again retreat,
Thinking that now the Lord is pleased.

King with knights alone sits,
But mendicants' belly merely he fills,
The hearts that are purged of sins,
Their voice is heard above stormy dins.

Can hypocrisy dare tread,
The domain that angels try to steal,
The autotape is switched on within,
Soon an evil thought in mind doth creep.

One who creates galaxies from void,
And bids them to return again,
On a babe he nine months spends,
But blows a volcano within seconds.

Except love what is there to offer?
And what to beg but his grace?
Rest bounties shall speedily wither,
Ere or after thou departest from world mundane.

Om Tat Sat



Live Up to Your Ideal

—Swami Sivananda

You should have your own ideal in life and should try hard to accomplish it. People vary in their capacities, mental and intellectual calibre, and in physical and mental strength to do things. Therefore, different people should have different ideals. Then only can they evolve quickly; then alone will they realize sure and rapid progress. The ideal of one man will not suit another man. If one keeps an ideal that he cannot realize, that is beyond his reach and capacity, he will get disappointment. He will give up his effort and become dull and lazy.

You may realize your ideal this moment or after ten years with faltering steps. It does not matter much how long it takes. Every man should endeavour his level best to live up to his ideal. He should put his whole energy, nerve-force and will into its realization. You can chalk out your own ideal according to your own standard. If you are unable to do this, your guide will select for you the ideal that is suitable to your capacity and standard.

One man may say: "I will teach the village boys and will give them free education. This is my ideal in life."

Another may say: "I will serve sick people and nurse them carefully. I will join any institution that serves humanity and render free service till the end of my life. Service of the sick is my ideal."

A third man may say: "I will beg from door to door and start a kitchen for feeding *Sādhus* and *Samnyāsīs*."

This is my ideal."

A fourth man may say: "My ideal is Self-realization. I will go to Gaṅgotrī and live in a cave and do intense meditation. This is my ideal.

All are quite correct according to their capacity and standard. You must gradually bring the ideal to the realization of God or *Brahma*. The highest ideal is Self-realization. Service, worship, etc., eventually result in the realization of the inner Self.

The ideal to have ethical perfection is just below the ideal of Self-realization, but this will lead to Self-realization. Self-realization is the greatest ideal in life. It is the most difficult of all ideals to fulfil. One who attempts Self-realization does the best service to mankind.

One should not treat a man who has a low ideal with contempt. He may be a baby-soul who is just crawling on the moral and spiritual path. Your duty is to help him in all possible ways in the realization or accomplishment of his ideal. You should give him all sorts of encouragement in his sincere endeavour to live up to his own highest ideal.

It is deplorable to note that the vast majority of persons have no ideal at all. Even educated persons do not cherish any ideal. They lead an aimless life and therefore drift hither and thither like a piece of straw. They make no progress in life. Is this not a very sad plight? Highly lamentable indeed! It is very difficult to get a human birth and yet people do not realize the importance of keeping up an ideal and living up to it. The ideal of 'eat, drink and be merry' is adopted by the Epicureans, gluttons and rich people. This school of thought has countless followers and the number is increasing by leaps and bounds daily. This is the ideal of the diabolical. This ideal will lead a man to the darkest regions of misery and sorrow.

Blessed is the man who keeps up an ideal and struggles hard to live up to it, for he will soon attain God-consciousness. Glory unto sincere struggling souls!



| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| स्थूलानि | पञ्चभूतानि | जडान्येव | स्वभावतः । |
| सृष्टानि | भवतैतानि | त्वदाज्ञां | लङ्घयन्ति न ॥ |
| तामसादहमो | राम | भूतानि | प्रभवन्ति हि । |
| कारणानुगमात्तेषां | जडत्वं | तामसं | स्वतः ॥ |

"These five gross elements are inert by nature. You Yourself created them and they never supersede your orders. From *Tāmasa* Ego these elements take their birth so naturally they follow their root cause in nature and quality with the result they themselves are *Tāmasa* and inert."

(A. R. VI. 3. 72-73)

A worldly man is suffering from delirious fever, as it were. Suppose there are pickled tamarind and jars of water in the room of such a patient. Now, how can you expect him to get rid of the disease? Just see, the very mention of pickled tamarind is making my mouth water!.....He must be removed for a few days to another place where there are neither pickled tamarind nor water-jars. Then he will be cured. After that if he returns to his old room he will have nothing to fear. Spiritual aspirants must live away for sometime from the sense objects which attract them. However, once they become dedicated to spiritual life, they can safely return to the world. The delirious fever' of worldliness has been cured.

—Sri Ramakrishna

Keep the Heart and Soul on the Aim

—Chandan Lal Dhody

This episode is from the lives of the *Kaurava* and the *Pāṇḍava* princes of the *Mahābhārata* when they were under the tutelage of their venerable teacher, *Guru Dronācārya*. Once, intending to test their skill in archery, the *Guru* made a bird of straw and placed it on the highest twig of a tall tree amidst thick foliage. He summoned the princes, his pupils, and desired them to come one by one to shoot at an eye of the bird without letting it drop down. The first to come forward was the prince who considered himself as the most efficient archery. He fixed the arrow on the bow and trained it at the aim. "What do you see? child," asked the *Guru*. "Sir, I see the tree, the foliage, the twig and the bird," was the prince's reply. "Attempt not, please. You will make yourself a laughing stock," commanded the *Guru*. He sent for the next one; he marked his arrow at the bird. "What do you see? dear," enquired the Master. "Sir, I see the foliage, the twig and the bird." "You will miss the mark." Another one was summoned. "What do you see? sonny," "Sir, I see the twig and the bird." "Please come back." Another one came. "What do you see? son." "I see the bird." "You also please retreat." Then came Arjuna, the hero of the *Mahābhārata* war. "What do you see? child." "Sir, I see only the bird's eye," was his instant reply. "Then shoot." Arjuna got the aim.



Man—Know Thy Deeds

—P. Govindarajan

From dawn to dusk human beings engage themselves in numerous activities both physical and mental. They can never remain idle even for a second and during sleep also the mind dreams. Even if the physical actions are forcibly stopped, the human mind will still remain always restive. Unlike the animals which exist only to preserve their physical body, man with his discriminating intellect should live purposefully in search of an ideal which can lead him to the realization of the ultimate truth and Reality. Before engaging himself in action he should have a clear idea of the actions which will be useful and beneficial and the actions which could be harmful and detrimental to his interests. In other words, he should have a proper knowledge of the prescribed and proscribed actions.

Scriptures lay down the Do's and Don'ts of moral life. *Śrīmad Bhagawad Gītā* has given us the *Karma Yoga* or *Yoga of Action* and the Old Testament has laid down the Ten Commandments. However, in the present age of high technology the scientific temper has unfortunately dealt a fatal blow to the spirit of religion. Rendered rudderless, the contemporary society has fostered a culture of immorality and hedonism.

Human action is always for fulfilment of desires and is never purposeless. The satisfaction derived out of fulfilment of desires brings happiness and leaves indelible impression in the human mind in the form of *Vāsanās*.

However, if the fulfilment of desires is thwarted anger is generated and with the loss of reasoning power there is moral decay. The *Vāsanās* or impressions of earlier experiences make man repeat pleasurable experience and indulge himself in the relentless pursuit of sensual pleasure as the only end in life. With scientific advancement man's reasoning power has become perverse and intellect has overpowered the feelings of heart. Rationality without emotions is bad but feelings without reason are worse. In human life there should be a proper blend of both intellect and emotions and one should not overpower the other. The result of excessive emphasis on reason in the scientific age has been that man has lost the meaning and purpose of life and he is compelled to lead a mechanical and boring life without a proper sense of direction. This is the state in which the society finds itself at present.

Most people in the contemporary world feel that there is no incentive to lead a morally good life as the large majority are immoral and corrupt. Helpless as they are, they choose to join the majority following the principle "when in Rome behave like a Roman". Seeing the good people suffering and immoral ones thriving they conclude that it is no good to be good. The arguments put forth by firm believers in the law of *Karma* (action) that bad actions can never yield good results and bad people can never escape the bad times as a result of their actions, fall only in deaf ears and the drama of life goes on.

Many raise the question whether there is any law governing the human actions and if so how it operates? Of all the religions in the world, only Hinduism (*Vedānta*) boldly declares that the law of *Karma* (actions) is inexorable and there is no escape from this eternal law. Based on this law, the evolution of soul over several lives through transmigration has been propounded. The law of *Karma*

and transmigration of soul can only explain rationally the inequalities at birth and the cause of human misery and suffering. According to this law, the past is reflected in the present and the future can be shaped by our present actions. It is, therefore, high time man tries to learn anew the Do's and Don'ts of his actions so that he does not waste the precious time of his present life in frivolous and purposeless activities.

The scriptures have laid down four *Puruṣārthas* or ends in life. These are *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Wealth), *Kāma* (Fulfilment of desires) and *Mokṣa* (Release from bondage). These four ends of life are unchangeable and apply to all human beings at all places and at all times. In this sense they are the eternal and unalterable ends of human life. In the modern science-dominated civilization, man has concentrated his attention on *Artha* (Wealth) and *Kāma* (Fulfilment of desires) giving a go by to the remaining two but the more important ends of life. Selfish but ignorant man wants to take only what is easy and quick and tries to avoid what is difficult and inconvenient. He wants immediate gratification of the here and now and has no patience to wait for the hereafter which in his view is uncertain.

An ethically pure and morally perfect life is the foundation on which a spiritual life can be built. Without observance of *Dharma* (righteous living) one can never aspire for *Mokṣa* or Release from bondage to *Karma* (actions). Rightly, a distinction is made between *Karma* or mere performance of actions and *Karma Yoga* or performance of such actions as can lead us Godward. In Verse 16 of Chapter IV of *Gītā*, the Lord says "What is action? What is inaction? Even the wise are puzzled."

No wonder perverse philosophers like Nietzsche say "What is wrong if I am immoral? Why should I be good?"

Leo Tolstoy in his *Confessions* also raises almost similar questions. Only those who firmly believe in law of *Karma* and transmigration of soul can forcefully reply such agnostics and religious faiths which do not believe in transmigration cannot provide any convincing explanations to these questions raised by the intellectuals.

Karma or actions can be of diverse kinds—physical and mental, secular and sacred, moral and immoral, *Tāmasika* (ignorant and slothful), *Rājasika* (restless and domineering) and *Sāttvika* (altruistic and wisdom-dominated). The *Vāsanās* or impressions left on the mind on account of the pleasure derived out of performance of actions make one repeat those acts again and again to derive ceaseless joy and happiness. Such repetitions of acts for sensual pleasure only tighten the noose of bondage around the neck of the soul imprisoned in the physical body and at the fag end of life when death stares at one's face one tries to find an escape from its horrors when it is too late.

Scriptures are meant for the good of the people and for their spiritual welfare. Rationalists who trust their own limited intellect unfortunately lose the higher aspects of human life and come to grief at the end of their life. Prejudice is always very harmful. Wiser counsel from whichever source it is available should be sought. In regard to matters on which science can provide no convincing answers there is no harm in seeking help from the scriptures. To the question—if a life of action is inevitable how should one live, the answer is provided by Verses 1 and 2 of *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* which says:

"Whatever life there is on earth God has caused it to be. Therefore, having offered everything in sacrifice in His name, Thou mayest be pleased with whatever thou mayest receive. Have thou then no desire in thy heart for wealth in whosoever's possession it may be.

In this world, work, work. Thus doing, desire to live a hundred years. Thou who have the bodily form, this is thy path. There is no other path than this. For man, there is no attachment involved in work. It is desire for the fruits of work that brings attachment."

Let us try to understand the purport of these two important Verses. Common sense tells us that something cannot come out of nothing and the universe must, therefore, have come out of some source. The Scriptures boldly declare that the universe has emerged out of *Brahman* the Creator. *Brahman* the Creator is thus the eternal owner of everything in this universe and living beings exist because of this all-pervasive *Brahman*. The basic purport of these two Verses is that we should live the full life span of hundred years ceaselessly doing work, sacrificing the results to the Creator who is the eternal owner of all things in the universe. The same idea is conveyed in Verse 27 of Chapter IX of *Gītā* where the Lord says:

"Whatever you do, whatsoever you eat, whatsoever you offer, whatsoever you give away to another and whatever austerity you practise, O Arjuna! do that as an offering to Me."

In fact in the Lord's view expressed in an earlier verse, he who enjoys the bounty of the *Devas* (gods) without giving them anything in return is but a thief.

In Verse 47 of Chapter II, the Lord in *Gītā* has the following crucial message to convey:

"You have the right to work alone and not for its fruits; let not the fruits of work be your motive; let not your attachment be to inaction."

As earlier stated, all actions are meant for attainment of some ends and actions without desire for results looks on the face of it impracticable. Mere performance of

actions for achieving earthly ends lead to bondage. The *Karma Yoga* advocated by the Lord favours renunciation of the fruits of action and not renunciation of action itself. In other words, the ethics of *Niṣkāma Karma* or action without the desire for the fruit thereof clearly indicates that among all the living species, only man with discriminative intellect possesses the necessary capacity to perform actions without an eye on the rewards. *Niṣkāma Karma* represents performance of actions without being impelled by the worldly ends of *Artha* (Wealth) and *Kāma* (Fulfilment of desires). It is duty for duty's sake without any concern for the outcome.

As has been said earlier, *Karma* (actions) can be of diverse kinds both secular and sacred. The question that is frequently raised in this regard is whether worldly actions of secular kind can come within the purview of *Niṣkāma Karma*? The answer is both 'Yes' and 'No' as there is no agreement among scholars about the precise definition of the term '*Niṣkāma Karma*'. Some feel that worldly actions of altruistic type done exclusively for the welfare of society and not for name or fame can be considered as *Niṣkāma Karma* and in support of their contention they quote Verse 20 of Chapter III of *Gītā* which reads as under:

"By work only Janaka and others reached perfection. Even if you seek only the welfare of the world you should work."

The critics point out that what the Lord has in mind is spiritual welfare and not material welfare of people and so secular actions cannot come within the ambit of the word "*Niṣkāma Karma*". In their view only scripture ordained *Varṇa Āśrama* duties performed as a *Yajña* or sacrifice to the Supreme Lord can come within the scope of '*Niṣkāma Karma*'. In this regard they point out Verses 45 and 46 of Chapter XVIII where the Lord says:

"Devoted each to his duty man attains perfection. Hear now how a man devoted to his own duty attains perfection.

He from whom all beings arise and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him, with his duty, will a man reach perfection."

A few others, however, hold the view that *Gītā* is a *Mokṣa Śāstra* (Scripture revealing the path for release) based both on the *Upaniṣads* and the *Pañcarātra Āgama* and by the term *Niṣkāma Karma* only the forms of worship prescribed by the *Pañcarātra Āgama* is meant. Only those physical and mental acts of worship which can unite the devotee with God can be termed as *Karma Yoga*. Secular actions can only lead to bondage and performance of scripture ordained *Varṇa Āśrama* duties without an eye on worldly ends is difficult. *Karma Yoga* as the term itself indicates is a special kind of worshipful action which will not only not bind us to *Saṁsāra* but will also be helpful in getting rid of the effects of past *Karma* without any future accretions. So in their view only actions which take the form of worship to please God with results surrendered to Him can only help us to unite with him through the *Yoga* of action. In support of their contention they point out to Verse 26 of Chapter IX of *Gītā* in which the Lord says:

"Whosoever offers to Me in true devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I accept the offering of that devotee who is pure of heart."

They, therefore, conclude that the Lord has in mind only acts of worship and only these actions can be deemed as *Niṣkāma Karma*.

Whatever the differences among the scholars, the fact remains that actions both secular and sacred have to be performed, according to *Gītācārya*, by surrendering the results to the Creator. It is He who owns the entire universe

eternally and we are only temporary residents on this planet. By the faithful discharge of one's duties ordained according to the qualities one possesses and the stage of life one is in, the bad tendencies of the mind can be got rid of over a period of time. He who works without attachment offering the fruits of all his actions to the Creator is untainted by the performance of actions. In fact the Lord says in Verse 11 of Chapter V that the *Karma Yogins* perform actions for the purification of their selves (mind). By focussing one's attention on the work to be performed than on its results, the aspirant develops gradually one pointed concentration leading to a clearer perception of knowledge. The Lord says in Verse 33 of Chapter IV that all works without exception culminate in knowledge. It is quite clear from these two verses that the practice of *Niṣkāma Karma* leads to purification of mind and acquisition of knowledge of Reality. Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount also says "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Verse 11 of *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad* also says that one should overcome death by *Avidyā* (actions) and attain immortality through *Vidyā* (Knowledge). The practice of *Karma Yoga* is an essential prelude for *Jñāna Yoga* (Self-Realization) and *Bhakti Yoga* (God-Realization).

Niṣkāma Karma Yoga is a very important concept developed by *Gītā* and given to mankind. Man should seriously ponder over this all important concept and spend his time and energy in such deeds as will be beneficial to his spiritual welfare. Only those activities which strictly conform to the principles of *Karma Yoga* can help man to lead a purposeful life.



Read and Digest

All the great men have been produced despite discouraging environments and circumstances; in fact the harder these circumstances, and more and more trying the environments, the stronger are the men who come out of those circumstances. So welcome all these outside troubles and anxieties.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

People sometimes assume ochre robes and play the part of renunciates when they have comfortable assured incomes or are looked after by someone who has to work to enable the renunciate not to work. With others it may be escapism from performing their duties in life.

—*The Mountain Path*

Contact with holy men is good. If you go near holy men, you will find holiness overflowing unconsciously in everything there.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

As oil is (found) in sesamum, clarified butter (ghee) in curd, water in river (underground) and fire in the *Araṇis*, similarly, this Self is realised in oneself by him who sees this One through truth and concentration.

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*



God 'N' Us

—*Shree Bhaisab*

Q. It is good to worship God. But our life is full of responsibilities. Only after fulfilling them could we proceed godwards!

A. Listen to a story:

A saint noticed a pilgrim walking anxiously on the bank of the holy Gaṅgā. On enquiry, the pilgrim said he was waiting for the waves to subside. Only then could he take a dip.

"Ah me!" said the saint, "Never would the waves settle down, nor ever you be able to take your dip!"

If you make up your mind, you can do it not in the light of circumstances but in spite of them.

Q. How to, Sir?

A. Look on your near and dear ones as gifts from God. Your wife and children are His gifts to you. Now say, "Oh God, see: You made me incharge of them in this birth. That's why I'm devoting my time and energies to them. But I'm myself obviously under Your charge. My care is your concern."

This attitude will work magic on Him.

Q. But Bhaisab, we are satisfied with the present....

A. The present pleasures serve the present demands of our body and mind. They can't quench the thirst of our inmost.

The sense-organs, howsoever long one might oblige them, cannot restore to the mind and spirit the happiness

sought after since births.

If we look deep down within, we'd see that something keeps eluding us: something we want to get and gain. Badly are we missing something: sadly are we missing someone. This something is Love: this someone is God. God is our cherished friend. He is the Lord of our life. He is our eternal Love. It is for Him that our thirsty eyes are looking in a thousand directions.

God alone rejuvenates us with endless capacity to regale in His sweetness.

Earthly pleasures ultimately leave us exhausted whereas God gives us the capacity to keep feeling the joy all forever. And, what is more, this capacity keeps increasing (rather than decreasing).

So, with all our plenty and pleasures, dear ones, we need God every minute and every moment of life. An analogy—

A man is thirsty since long. In order to quench his thirst, he lies in the open at night only for the dew-drops to fall and get into his mouth.

Is the trouble worthwhile? Can dew-drops quench his thirst?

No, only water can. We are also thirsty since births. Not our mad run after the world, but a mild step towards Him.....

Q. Where is the room for God in these days of high speed and competition?

A. In the heart!

Sender—*Manmohan Gupta*



The Barhe Bābā of Jagannathpuri

—Braj Gopal Das Agrawal

I feel inclined to place before the readers a biographical sketch of a great Bengali saint who lived amongst us, not long ago, as an embodiment of universal love and religion.

He was born at Mahishkhola in Jessore district (now in Bangladesh) in 1853. His father was the ruling zemindar of the place. The parents, Śrī Mohana Candra Ghoṣa and Smt. Kanaka Sundarī, had four sons and one daughter, he being the third child.

On the eve of his birthday, Nature emerged in its wildest and fiercest form. Thrashing rain, thunder and lightning, stormy wind lasted the whole night. The betel nut tree under which the mother lay in the labour room was struck with lightning and reduced to ashes. No damage however, was caused to the room and the inmates. At dawn, when the child was born, the things were all normal. This phenomenon indeed meant that the child brought with him peace and happiness for suffering mankind. Strange, however, are the ways of God. The child, who meant love and joy to all he met in life, was himself robbed of the love and affection he badly needed at that tender age. His father and all his brothers left, one after the other, for their heavenly abode while he was still under ten.

Rāi Carana, so he was named, was admitted to the Narail High School. He was an exceptional child. Even at that early age, he was full of the milk of human kindness. He would show great consideration for others and would

do anything to alleviate their distress. One day, for example, Rāi Carana instantly gave his costly woollen shawl to a poor man shivering with cold. Sometimes he would remove the thorns from the beaten path through the jungle that the passers by might move unharmed.

"The child is father of the man", said the poet. Our Rāi Carana was a fine illustration of this. His little acts of humanity were just like buds which later on bloomed and thrilled all and sundry with their varied colours and scents. I cannot here resist the temptation to recount another incident that brought out the great heights of his personality. One day, while returning from school, Rāi Carana noticed an old man lying on the wayside. The bundle of the articles he had brought from the market lay near him. It was found that the man suddenly had fever and was unable to carry the load home. Rāi Carana promptly put the load on his own head and helped the man rise to his feet. The man protested, "No, no, don't touch me *Bābūjī!* I am a low caste man. Rāi Carana replied, "Whoever you are, you need my help now " and took the man safely to the latter's house. Really, humanity knows no caste, creed or colour.

Rāi Carana's sister got married. He himself, at the age of seventeen, was married and soon afterwards, lost his mother.

As a zemindar, he was very popular among the people under his care. He had great zemindari insight and managed his estate ably. He invited the wild Santhāls to cultivate the vast tracts of wasteland in the village and settle there.

He was a great philanthropist and in many ways he helped the poor of the area. He got large tanks excavated at his expense that they might not suffer from scarcity of water. He got free schools opened for the children, paying the teachers from his own pocket.

Apparently Rāi Carana was happy and contented. One Bengali song he often sang these days, however, clearly showed the agony of his heart his people did not see. The song, rendered in English by Narendra Nātha Catterjī, was as follows:

"When, O, when will you take the name of the Lord!
The days are numbered and they will end ere long.
The drops of water on the lotus are unsteady,—
They fall off at the breath of the gentlest wind;
Even so is life; death comes and brushes it away.
The limbs are there, you cannot move them;
There are the eyes, but the light is fled;
The ears are open; they can no longer catch
The names of the Lord in the hour of death."

Actually Rāi Carana's soul was crying for something deeper and greater. He was to play his role on a far wider stage than that his immediate surroundings provided. One day, therefore, he left the house forever unnoticed, unannounced. He arrived at the temple of the goddess *Kālī* at Bhawanipur (Distt. Bagura) and performed *Puraścaraṇa* during the hour of the solar eclipse. Towards the end of this religious practice, Mother Divine appeared to him and put Her blessing hand on his head, saying: "Go to the river Sarayū. You shall meet your *Guru* there and have your soul's craving fulfilled.

Gracious Mother appeared similarly in person to His Holiness Śaṅkarācārya Purī, the saint who lived on the bank of the river in Ayodhya, and apprised him of Rāi Carana's arrival there in advance. Not only that, she asked the saint to break his vow not to have a second disciple. Mother of the universe is bound to do all this for one who gives oneself upto Her.

Purīrāja initiated Rāi Carana into the Universal Religion of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and taught him the principles that

would guide him now onwards. The salient points of this religion are—

(1) To be kind to all creatures (2) To give oneself up to the service of the *Vaiṣṇavas* (those who, in a wider sense, are truly religious) and (3) To relish the name of the Lord.

Then one day, the Master bade Rāi Carana to proceed to Jagannathpuri and spread the name of the Lord, for it was his life's mission. The worthy disciple promptly obeyed. Visiting a number of holy places in the country, Rāi Carana at last came to Navadweep, the birth place, of Śrī Caitanya. Here he came to be known, by sheer coincidence, as Rājen Bābū and was joined by three young devoted souls. All birds of one feather!

This small band of like-minded souls, instinctively united together just by their sentiment of universal brotherhood and, of course, oneness of some latent purpose, now moved towards *Puri Dhāma*. Theirs was a *Śaṅkīrtana* party led by Rājena Bābū, eldest as he was.

Rājena Bābū, in frenzy divine, moved onward, singing and dancing, laughing and weeping simultaneously. He had a sweet melodious voice and his own novel style of dancing. Devotional songs, most of them his own inspiration, would come to his lips and he would go on singing, yes, "Singing hymns unbidden". It was bliss to see him dance and hear him sing. Wherever he went, people spellbound would throng to see, the spontaneous play of the spirit and follow him as far as possible.

At last Rājena Bābū arrived at Puri, which was the main centre of his activities for the rest of his life. Now, he had come to be known as Barhe Bābājī and people came to be initiated by him. 'Barhe' he really was—both physically and spiritually. He was of unusually tall stature. Standing amongst thousands of people, he could be seen

and recognised from a great distance. He was *Barhe Bābājī* otherwise too. As a true follower of Śrī Caitanya, he had great love and regard for everyone. Wasn't everybody a manifestation of his Supreme Lord? Caste, creed, and colour could not alienate people from the realm of his religion. *Barhe Bābājī* had thousands of disciples, mostly in Bengal and Orissa. He regarded even them as his *Gurus*. "They are here with me", pointing to some of them he once said to a visitor, "to teach me (indirectly, of course) how to conduct oneself in life."

Barhe Bābājī spread the Name of the Lord (*Hari Nāma*) through his *Śaṅkīrtanas* wherever he went. He held that the name was omnipotent. It stirs love not only in man but also in the lower animals and the vegetable species as well. Such is the power of the Name of the Lord that trees begin to dance, stones melt and beasts behave like cultured, human beings, the dead come to life again. *Barhe Bābājī* demonstrated all this on the strength of the Lord's Name. No hypnotism, no magic. The fact is *Hari* (God) and His Name are one, and this alone explains the whole thing. *Barhe Bābājī's* perfect faith in the latter is now, more than ever before, the need of the world when humanity, despite all advancement and progress, is so miserable, woebegone and helpless.



"Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world." Be therefore spiritual first; have something to give and then stand before the world and give it. Religion is not talk, or doctrines, or theories; nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

The Ideal of Vedānta Philosophy

—Dr. A. R. Mohapatra

If we define the word philosophy we find that 'philos' means 'to love' and 'sophia' means 'wisdom' and, therefore, philosophy means the 'love of wisdom'. In India, true love and highest wisdom are one and the same, and though philosophy generally implies the idea of generalized and speculative thoughts alongwith reason and intellect, yet in truth it signifies the highest intuitive perception *Anubhūti* or the Absolute Truth. In India, we call philosophy as *Darśana* and it means to see or to introspect God in everything.

Vedānta philosophy is one of the oldest systems of philosophy in India and it harmonizes with the ultimate conclusion of modern science in describing the process of cosmic evolution from one primordial substance into the existing variety of the universe.

Vedānta philosophy (*Advaita*) teaches that there is one reality, one life, one spirit, one intelligence and one mind in the universe of which the individuals are nothing but so many manifestations in time and space. This one Reality has been called by different names by different philosophers and mystics. It is named *Brahman* in *Vedānta*.

Vedānta philosophy teaches equality and sameness of true nature of all human beings. The teaching of *Vedānta* lies in the universal tolerance, active co-operation and the realisation of the infinite soul. The *Brahman* of *Vedānta* being the most universal and ultimate has no attributes

but is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Sat, Cit* and *Ānanda*). *Brahman* is that by knowing which everything is known, that in which everything is included. The high and the low has the same place in it.

The *Vedānta* teaches men to have faith in themselves first. The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all great men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. The secret of *Vedānta* is: 'Believe in yourselves first, and then believe in anything else.'

The essence of *Vedānta* is assertion of the divinity of man, as embodied in the cryptic saying: 'Thou art That! The Vedantic teaching of faith in oneself based on the idea of one's inherent Divinity is the best means for generating this strength and inspiration.

According to *Vedānta* the Self is identical with the *Brahman*. *Brahman* alone is true, all else is false, I am *Brahman*. "The central ideal of *Vedānta* is oneness. Everything is that One, the difference is in degree and not in kind. There is only one Existence, one Self, which is called by different names when it passes through time, space and causation. Everything in this universe is that One appearing in various forms.

The *Vedānta* recognises no sin, it only recognises error. And the greatest error, says the *Vedānta*, is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature and that you have no power and you cannot do this and that. Therefore, whosoever thinks he is weak is wrong, whosoever thinks he is impure is wrong, and is throwing a bad thought into the world.

Vedānta philosophy is not pessimistic. There is no other philosophy in the world which teaches so perfect

a method to gain self-control, peace and happiness as *Vedānta*. Thus the teaching of *Vedānta* is most practical and sublime.



At the core, all sects and all religions have the same aim; and they were only quarrelling for their own selfish purposes—they were not anxious about the truth, but about 'my name' and 'your name'. Two of them preached the same truth, but one of them said—"That cannot be true, because I have not put upon it the seal of my name. Therefore do not listen to him." And the other man said—"Do not hear him, although he is preaching very much the same thing yet it is not true because he does not preach it in my name."

—Swami Vivekananda

| | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| मायातीतं | माधवमाद्यं | जगदादिं | |
| | मानातीतं | मोहविनाशं | मुनिबन्धम्। |
| योगिष्येयं | योगविधानं | परिपूर्णं | |
| | वन्दे रामं | रञ्जितलोकं | रमणीयम्॥ |

"You are beyond the ken of *Māyā*, Lord of *Lakṣmī*, the very first person, the origin of the universe, beyond the proofs like *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumāna* etc., destroyer of ignorance, adorable to the *Munis*, to be meditated upon by the *Yogīs*, proponent of yogic discipline, complete in yourself. I salute such *Rāma* whose beauty is a feast to the eyes and who is giver of happiness to the world."

(A.R. VI. 13.12)

Ajātaśatru

"My Lord"! The voice was as sweet as it was full of pathos. The body tender and delicate like flower and the path strewn with pebble and thorns. As a matter of fact there was no path as such. Either they had to walk through the large sized grass or over the pebbles and sharp edged grass like *Kuśa* etc. It was nothing but a stroke of ill-luck that the queen whom even sun-god could not dare to see and touch; who never walked on the naked ground even on the smooth floor of the palace; the maid servants spread the velvety carpets when she had a mind to walk was alas compelled to tread a thorny path of jungle in order to save her life and the life of the King which was many times dearer to her from the cruel sword of the enemy which chopped off the head of her only son, the heir apparent of Sauvīra kingdom.

The sun was in the mid sky. The ground had become hot. The sweat was rolling down from her body. Blisters which were already there, now started bursting one by one. It was extremely painful for her to walk over the ground particularly where there were no grass. The sharp small pebbles pricking into the blisters caused unbearable pain. Walking had become absolutely impossible, even though quite unwillingly the one single addressing word escaped from her lips.

The King was a few steps ahead. He turned back and looked at the pitiable conditions of his lovely and lovable

queen and immediately extended a helping hand. He put her arm on his shoulder and spoke encouragingly—"Look there *Devī* not very far there are green trees, there must be some water stream. I know there is a small cave. *Gurudeva* occasionally took rest in that and I used to come for his *Darśana*. Some forest fruits and beet-roots might be available there. We will make our residence there. There was no trace of any tremor or any shadow of pain in his voice. He was speaking in such a carefree manner as if he was quite unaffected with the blisters in his feet and the thorns stuck therein. None of the two had any ornaments. The unearthly beauty of the queen could hardly be covered by the silk saree she was wearing and the King! he had a *Dhotī*—The only garment on his body. He did not had even a shawl on his shoulders. The long curly hairs were waving in the hot wind. If something pricked in the feet, he did not even look to it. He simply bent the leg from the knee, stood on one leg and removed the object, that is all. Of course he did stop when the same happened to the queen and when once he tried to remove the thorn from her feet with his own hands, she gazed at him in such a way that he pulled it back.

"How much distance have we covered" the queen asked sitting on a rock with the support of the king. She was exhausted. There was pain and burning in her soles. However the destination was not very far—only a few cubits away.

"Quite far—approximately four-five miles away from the city" replied the King.

"Only this much?" She stood up while at her sixes and sevens. The signs of terror were apparent on her face. She was under the impression that she must have covered a distance of forty-fifty miles. "No rest. Get up please. Let us move. This place is within the easy reach of enemy

spies. They will catch hold of us before it is evening. We must not stop here. This place is neither a dense forest nor any inaccessible mountain." She absolutely forgot her pain.

The King consoled her—"Chaste lady, we are not absconders. We have simply deserted the capital in order to avoid any obstruction in the new set up imposed by the new administrator. Due to our presence in the city the allegiance of the people towards us might have caused an upheaval in the kingdom. I am not timid. I know what as a *Kṣatriya* ruler I should do. I never forget that you cannot avoid that which is destined to happen whether you are in a fort or in a jungle."

"He is your enemy. He will surely like to arrest you and when he puts his hands on you....." She could not speak further. The inauspicious words did not come to her lips. The big eyes and their focus centred over the face of the King. There was a silent request in it to lengthen the interval between them and the enemy as much as it was possible.

Hush! Nobody is enemy to anybody. Who is enemy in the world and whose? A divine unearthly smile danced on his face. He was quite unaffected and unmindful of the situation. He continued—"The real enemy everybody keeps hidden in the chamber of his heart. Wherever he goes they accompany him. One who has overpowered these inner enemies for him there is no enemy in the outer world. And mind it, the outer enemies are after your accumulation. But you have disowned everything—there remains no cause of enmity with anybody. And if you are destined to undergo any suffering, it is bound to come—near or far.

The queen spoke nothing. She felt that her consort King has made a decision and would not move an inch come what may. In the heart of her hearts she started

invoking God.

x

x

x

x

"I am thankful for the honour. I know your daughter—the Princess is exceptionally beautiful. No girl on earth can surpass her in physical beauty, and intelligence. She is unequal in her merits ethical or moral. She is expert in domestic management, has an extraordinary command over fine arts. No wonder that many princes mighty and meritorious want her hands. She deserves all encomiums. Out of the queue you found in me a suitable match for her. It is an honour for me but you know I am married and I have no faith in polygamy. I do not have a son suitable for your daughter. I can extend a fraternal hand towards her. I hope you will excuse me for this impudence." The King wrote a letter with his own hands rolled in a silken cloth and handed it over to the *Brāhmaṇa* envoy of the Kashmir King and requested him to explain the situation.

The Kashmir King was eager to see marital relation with Sauvīra materialized. So he sent his official priest with a coconut. The ministers advised Sauvīra King to accept the nut and pay due respect to the sovereignty of Kashmir. The Sauvīra King disagreed with the argument that a King should have queens more than one for political considerations. Eventually the priest went back empty handed.

The Kashmir could not bear this gross insult. The apologising letter had absolutely no effect. Kashmir announced war against Sauvīra and hectic war preparation started. A huge army from Kashmir marched towards Sauvīra.

The Sauvīra King got the news. He was not at all disturbed. He summoned his commander-in-chief and passed necessary orders to make military preparations. He expressed his determination to lead the army himself. The ministers were delightfully shocked to know of the royal

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decision as they had so far seen the peaceful side of their king. They never expected that the king would be prepared for the war.

The news spread like wild fire and within no time the entire country was converted into a military cantonment. Every male capable of holding weapons started for the frontier.

A natural overflow of popular emotion inundated the entire Sauvāra. "*Mahārāja* himself is coming to the battlefield to lead his forces. The prophet of peace is going to hold weapons in his hands in order to scrupulously follow his *Kṣatriya Dharma*." Such was the topic of talks and gossips on every cross-roads. The king was entirely carefree entrusting everything to the capable hands of Almighty. To him it was a simple discharge of his duty unmindful of the results.

Kashmir King was not a fool. A very shrewd administrator. He got the reports from his spies. Immediately he changed his tactics. "I was deeply touched by your letter. So I have come to have *Darśana* of a godly person with an extended hand of friendship" greeted the Kashmir King. The transparent King of Sauvāra welcomed from his very core of heart the friendly hands of Kashmir. He received the Kashmir King, the royal guest in a most cordial and affectionate manner.

The dark and deadly night witnessed a great massacre in the fort of Sauvāra. The Kashmiri demon did not spare even the Sauvāra Prince, a budding delicate rose, and chopped his head off and the King with his Queen had to vacate the fort, capital and the kingdom. The delicate beautiful queen even unseen so far by the sun-god had to walk with her naked feet on an uneven path of the jungle. She was completely exhausted and scared to death for the fear of losing her husband also.

The King caressingly consoled her. He did not look

perturbed at all and was quite carefree for unknown future. All of a sudden a loud noise mingled with a sound of hooves of the horses beating the ground became audible as if it was closing every moment. The frightened queen even though on the verge of collapse, got up and insisted that they should run away from the place. "It is those very devils approaching fast. I beseech you to hide yourself somewhere in a safe place" said the queen.

"Now don't get jumpy and don't be mad. Don't think that I am running away. No, I have simply left behind my kingdom the cause of enmity. Take it that nobody is enemy to any person. The person himself is his own friend or his own enemy. I do not entertain any sense of enmity to anyone. So why should I worry?" explained the King like a real *Sthitaprajña*.

By now the horse riders were dismounting with a chorus shouting "Save me please, save me, saviour save me." The Kashmir King fell at the feet of the Sauvira King. He said—"You have taken my daughter to be your sister. That way I happened to be your uncle. I have committed an unpardonable sin. Yet you are a great man. Excuse me for my sins." His voice was choked with tears.

Now again Sauvira King exhibited his innate greatness. He embraced him and consoled him.

What happened was like this—during the night there was a terrible battle and uproar. The sleeping city and its warriors came to know what was going on inside the fort. They rushed and the enemy could not get an opportunity to close the gate. Almost every soldier of Kashmir was killed and with great difficulty the Kashmir King somehow managed to flee from the fort followed by a few trusted guards.

The Sauvira King apparently served as an armour to his deadliest enemy since he was an *Ajātaśatru* (one without an enemy).



What Hinduism Stands For

—Mohan Lal Gupta

Many are the scholars and authors who have dwelt at length on the universal values and way of life, known as Hinduism, *Hindutva* or *Hindu Dharma*. However there have been attempts to explain the inexplicable, but without success, as *Hindu Dharma* is a vast ocean and each of the authors making an attempt to study it, have been able to comprehend and present only some facets which have been more appealing to them.

Usually Hinduism is misunderstood. Quite a few scholars consider it a jumble of creeds and rituals. Many scholars label Hinduism "a mosaic of contrary beliefs." A closer examination would, however, reveal how superficial and shallow are these views. They do not take into account the unique attributes of Hinduism—a religion which to use the words of wandering Indian monk Swāmī Vivekānanda, "admits of a marvellous variation, an infinite amount of liberty to think and live one's life and the central message of which finds expression in the Holy book *Gītā* through the words of Hindu God incarnate Lord Kṛṣṇa: "Through whatever path human beings come to me, I accept them through that very path."

Hinduism is basically a way of life based primarily on the philosophy of *Dharma* embodying the ten fundamental principles of life: fortitude, forgiveness, mind control, sense control, non-theft, purity of body and mind, wisdom, knowledge, truth and non-anger.

But when reduced to its essence, the concept of *Dharma* boils down to righteousness in its widest connotation. It is by no means a synonym for religion as is the widespread belief. Nor is it a body of set rituals or a fixed mode of worship. It does not even have a central authority like Pope in Christianity.

It is the very core and crux of an individual's or a nation's genius, the fundamental part of their being, their innate, intrinsic nature as revealed in their conduct or behaviour, which, in the case of India has all along been marked by tolerance, magnanimity and a spirit of accommodation.

The ideals of nationalism evolved by the ancient sages in India were based not on egoism of individual or the society, but keeping in view the necessity for the spiritual development of the citizens.

Hinduism not merely envisages, but actually treats the whole world as a family, true to the Upanishadic concept of *Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam* (The whole world is a family).

Concern for the welfare of all humanity is also enshrined in Hinduism. The whole world so far has not known a better principle for smooth functioning of society than the one conceived by Hindu sages, saints and philosophers: Victory be to *Dharma*, *Adharma* (non religious) should meet with destruction, let there be goodwill among all beings, and let there be welfare of the whole world.

No religious ceremony in Hindu culture is considered complete without the full-throated repetitive utterances of this slogan by the congregation so that it permeates the whole atmosphere. The entire Hindu community is completely imbued with and enthused by the profound prayer.

It is precisely such sentiments that ultimately move the minds of the masses and go finally to form the character of a nation.

The values enshrined in this prayer are the most constructive and sustaining force in the world. It is these noble ideals that make civilised life possible and ultimately hold everything together for peaceful existence of all beings. Without such ennobling guidance humanity would in no time succumb to the dehumanising forces in the universe. This is, however, part of a higher order which is perhaps beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals or the followers of other religions.

Hindu religion is also known as *Mānava Dharma* (Human Religion) which is a product of *Tapas*—deep contemplation and study by the Hindu sages.

The *Hindu Dharma* or *Mānava Dharma* is based on three truths, viz., (1) Unity in diversity, (2) the theory of *Karma* or law of causation and the development and unfoldment of life (3) the mutually complementary nature of creation.

That all we see in this universe is pervaded by one ultimate reality. This reality is a proven scientific truth today which Hindu sages have recognised since time immemorial.

It must be noted that the Law of *Karma* and rebirth, though not accepted by semitic religions, has become a part and parcel of modern scientific studies and investigations, especially in the department of parapsychological studies in the western countries.

The mutually complementary nature of creation, made Hindu sages think of man and other beings in the world not as cogs in the wheel, but as beings in the process of evolution into an integral whole, each complimenting the other in their efforts.

The great Hindu sages did recognise the fact that men are in different levels of evolution and each has to evolve in his or her own way depending on the aptitudes,

tempëraments and conditions of life. Therefore Hindu sages prescribed *Dharma* as that which harmonizes all these diversities in human beings and holds all together. "Holding all together" is the very meaning of the term *Dharma*.

The Hindu attitude of acceptance, much different from mere tolerance, of various ways of worship, especially those that have originated outside India, like Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Hindus rejected the word tolerance because it signifies deep hatred inside, while the word acceptance ensures understanding and respect for other faiths. India has emerged as a land that fosters all religious thoughts as different pathways to one ultimate reality.

The path of Hindus is not that of revolution which is negative in its approach but by evolution which is marked by tolerance, compassion and kindness.

Hinduism is eternal. A continuous attempt to "reach God and see God", Hinduism is an everlasting process to endeavour and realise divinity within oneself.

An eminent American thinker, J. B. Prat, has significantly observed: "Of all the religions of the world, Hinduism is the only one which tends to survive while all others have died or are on their death beds in the age of science and reason. The reason for the immortality is that while retaining its spiritual identity, it has been changing its outward form in accordance with the demands of time."



As light emanates from the Sun, as fragrance emanates from the rose, as coolness emanates from the beautiful snowy peaks, mountain streams and springs, so let peace, joy, love and light proceed from you, O Light of lights.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Hints for God-realization

—Keshoram Aggarwal

God is present in us. He is not far away. He is present at all times, at every place and in all beings. Therefore He can be realised at any moment. There is no future in it. Need is for acute hunger for His realization. To develop this hunger you may take time or you may develop instantly.

God is always yours. The body and its relations and the worldly things are not yours. God never deserts you but the body and worldly things are leaving you every moment. Why not aspire only for God?

God-realization is not a product of action. It is self intuition. This is possible through ardent faith, intense love or discrimination.

This human body is a rare divine blessing. Having obtained it, it is sheer foolishness to waste it in sensuality. All sense objects when enjoyed, bring pain in beginning and end. To while away our valuable time in acquiring these worldly objects and enjoying them is playing false with ourselves as this body is a divine gift for God-realization alone. If somehow or the other we are convinced of this fact we can develop ardent faith or love in God or develop keen discrimination.



Listen to My Supreme Word

"Thus hath wisdom, most secret of all secrets, been given to thee by Me. After exhaustively reflecting about it, act as thou desirest" (*Gītā* XVIII. 63).

Kṛṣṇa, Lord of *Yōga* (the God-united *Guru* of Arjuna—symbolically, the voice of spirit, speaking as vibrations of truth in the devotee's soul), has revealed in his divine discourse the wondrous truths of the universal science of *Yoga*:

"O Arjuna, I have narrated to you the most secret wisdom, bestowing on your receptive consciousness the full perception of truth concerning the attainment of liberation....."

"Remember that you are an independent agent, free to act according to this most profound advice for liberation or to remain bound by submission to the influence of the ego and the sense consciousness of the body. O Arjuna, misuse not your power of free choice! Determine to increase the power of intuition, by which alone you can perceive this deep wisdom. Use your free will to meditate again and again upon the soul, that you may realize, through your awakened intuition, all the secret truths I have revealed to you."

"Again listen to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Because thou art dearly loved by Me, I will relate what is beneficial to thee" (*Gītā* XVIII. 64).

Having endowed each soul with free will, God will

never force anyone to choose Him over lesser desires. But His love is eternal, pursuing His errant children always—from incarnation to incarnation, age after age. Like the mother cow who runs after her straying calf, He follows His offspring with watchful solicitude, ever calling and coaxing them to return to Him.

God's love towards His children is unconditional because He feels responsible for having sent them out from Him into the delusion and misery of this world. If they see through false worldly lures and look to Him—above all, if they love Him, the giver, in preference to His material gifts—they return to Him by the power of their virtue. Even in the darkest hours of human decline, when transgressors have become extremely entangled in delusion by repeated performance of wrong actions, God comes through liberated masters or other great incarnations to enlighten and redeem those who repent. Such is the love of God for all His children, even the sinful and those who love Him not. Never does He punish even the continuously erring ones with eternal damnation; somehow, in some way, the unseen God—the Maker, and therefore the Wielder of the law of cause and effect—helps all men to come back to Him.

On the field of eternity, the Lord thought to play the game of hide-and-seek with His children for a little while; He hid Himself behind veils of cosmic delusion. Unseeing man stumbles through the darkness of *Māyā*, seeking that elusive unknown something—falling into ditches of ignorance and pits of misery. Yet the game goes on because man loves the excitement and the chance rewards grasped amid the hazards.

But even though God has divorced human beings from conscious perception of Him, still He is romancing them: and through hardships and tests is trying to persuade them

to forsake their fascination with the ephemeral shadows of matter and return to His Blessedness.

After the vicissitudes of many incarnations in the lonesome wilderness of delusive creation—after lifetimes of the romance of hiding and almost meeting, of parting and eagerly being sought—man cries from the depths of his heart, "Enough!" When worldly enticements are at last deemed not worth their toll of suffering and precarious wandering in *Māyā*, and the player cries out from his core for deliverance, then the hidden God by His unseen touch melts the band of unknowing from man's eyes of wisdom. That soul no longer has to blunder through the stygian darkness. Once the enlightened seeker has completely forsaken his errors, God liberates that soul forever.

Then in joy and more joy the Lord appears openly to His devotee. He makes known that man's sojourn in *Māyā* was meant only for entertainment; and that if everyone found Him easily, then His cosmic *Līlā* of hide-and-seek would be over in a trice. He explains that His hiding was not meant to cause suffering, but to heighten the enjoyment of man's ultimate, inevitable discovery of the Eternal Love.

—Self-Realization



Buddha is expressly agnostic about God; but God is everywhere preached in our religion. The *Vedas* teach God—both personal and impersonal. God is everywhere preached in the *Gītā*. Hinduism is nothing without God. The *Vedas* are nothing without Him. That is the only way to salvation. *Samnyāsīs* have to repeat the following several times: I, wishing for *Mukti*, take refuge in God, who created the world, who breathed out the *Vedas*.

—Swami Vivekananda

Hymn to Sun-God

दीन-दयालु दिवाकर देवा । कर मुनि, मनुज, सुरासुर सेवा ॥ १ ॥
हिम-तम-करि-केहरि करमाली । दहन दोष-दुख-दुरित-रुजाली ॥ २ ॥
कोक-कोकनद-लोक-प्रकासी । तेज-प्रताप-रूप-रस-रासी ॥ ३ ॥
सारथि-पंगु, दिव्य रथ-गामी । हरि-संकर-बिधि मूर्ति स्वामी ॥ ४ ॥
बेद-पुरान प्रगट जस जागै । तुलसी राम-भगति बर माँगै ॥ ५ ॥

(*Vinaya Patrikā* 2)

Oh Sun-God! You are compassionate towards the humble. Sages, men, gods and demons (all) serve you.

You are visibly a lion to annihilate the elephants of frost and darkness. You are putting on the rosary of rays. You reduce defaults, distresses, sins and diseases to ashes like fire.

You please the *Cakawā-Cakawī* birds (by putting an end to their night-long separation) and delight the red lotus (by causing it to bloom). You illuminate the entire universe. You are the accumulation of radiance, valour, beauty and sentiments.

You are moving seated on a divine chariot, but its driver is cripple. You appear in the form of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa*.

Your glory is described by *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*. *Tulasīdāsa* begs you (only) for devotion to Śrī Rāma's lotus feet.

Translated by Prof. Janardan Prasad Shrivastava



An Appeal

Dear contributors,

Last year The Kalyana-Kalpataru published Rāma Number as its Special Issue. Taking inspiration from the earthly sojourn of Lord Rāma and his well-balanced social conduct and behaviour we have decided to bring out Vedānta Number this year. Vedānta has been a perennial source of inspiration to many thinkers of past and present. It will certainly continue to be so for the coming centuries, we hope so.

We request and hope that our learned readers will receive it with the same warmth as usual and help the magazine to fight against the mighty currents of the dreadful materialism.

A tentative synopsis of the number is given below. It is not final. Our scholarly contributors may take liberty to make a topic of their own choice pertaining to Vedānta. The writings should be limited to 10 typed pages at the most in order to accommodate as many authors as possible.

Part I

1. What is Vedānta
2. Vedantic principles in Vedas
3. Vedānta and theology
4. Theosophy and Vedānta
5. All theological concepts culminate into the Vedantic principles
6. Religion and Vedānta
7. Vedānta and Upaniṣads
8. Vedānta in Purāṇas
9. Pāṇini and the Vedantic background
10. Vedānta the bedrock of grammatical structure
11. Vedantic analysis of Nāma, Ākhyāta, Upasarga and Nipāta
12. Praṇava: The root of cosmic creation
13. The 'Big Bang' theory of modern Physics with reference to Omkāra.
14. Vedānta and the Sanskrit poetics
15. Vedantic appreciation of Bhaṭṭanāyaka
16. Vedānta and Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa (Generalization) in creative poetics
17. Vedānta and dramaturgy of Bharata Muni
18. Vedānta and Mathematics
19. The Arithmetical base of Vedantic conception
20. The circular conception of cosmic movement
21. The Atomic theory of creation with special reference to Vedānta

Part II (Metaphysical)

1. Vedānta and the conception of Brahma
2. The relation between Jīva and Brahma
3. The relation between Jīva and Jagat
4. The relation between Brahma and Jagat
5. The apparent reality of universe

6. The Vivarta and Māyā theory of Śaṅkarācārya
7. Is Advaita indebted to Buddhism in anyway?
8. Vedānta and Brahmasūtra
9. Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā
10. Vedānta and Upaniṣads
11. Vedānta and Yogasūtra
12. Vedānta and Gītā
13. The Vedantic base of Rāmakathā
14. The Vedantic base of incarnation theory
15. Vedānta and Yogavāsiṣṭha

Part III (Conceptual Vedānta)

1. Advaita of Śaṅkara
2. Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja
3. Śuddhādvaita
4. Dvaitādvaita
5. Bhedābheda
6. Śaivādvaita
7. Pratyabhijñā and Abhivyakti—principles of-
8. Śāktādvaita
9. Vedānta and expressionism of Croche
10. Dvaita of Madhvācārya
11. Traita of Śaivasiddhānta
12. Vedānta and Jainism
13. Vedānta and Buddhism
14. Vedānta and Nihilism
15. Vedānta and the other philosophical schools of India

Part IV (Application of Vedānta)

1. Vedānta in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
2. Vedānta in Rāmācāritamānasa
3. Vedānta in South Indian works literary or philosophical
4. Social aspects of Vedānta
5. Practical Vedānta of Vivekānanda
6. Vedānta of Rāmātīrtha
7. Vedānta and Mahātmā Gāndhī
8. Vedānta and Karl Marx
9. Vedānta of Vinobābhāwe
10. Vedānta of Rāmāna Maharṣi
11. Vedānta and Jesus Christ
12. What is the World—creation, manifestation or appearance?
13. The importance of Gāyatrīmantra
14. The different Gāyatrī for different deities
15. Prayer

N. B. The articles must reach this office latest by 31st May, 1997.

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